



Northern Snakehead Distribution in Virginia

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Objective

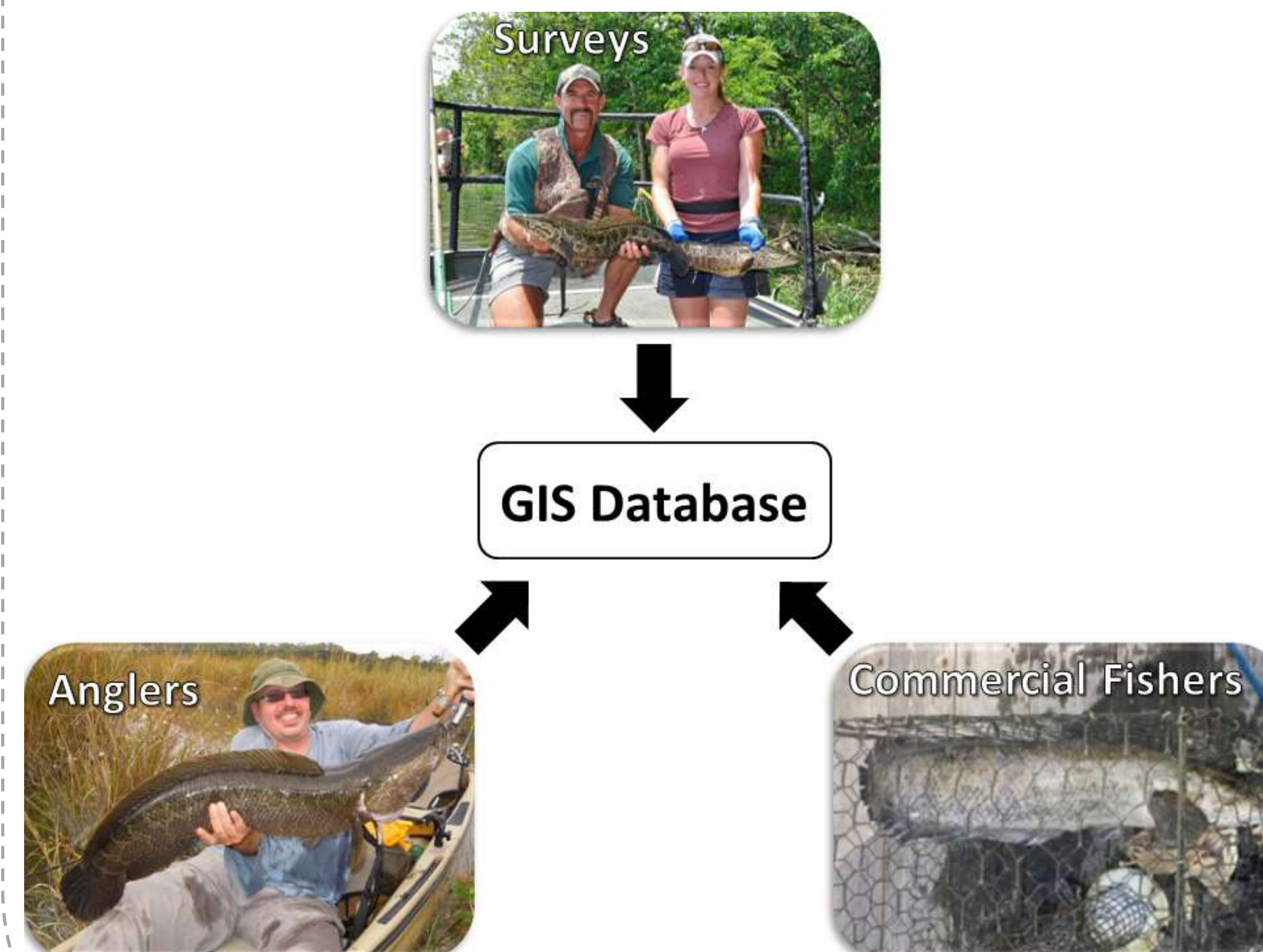
- ◆ Utilize existing data sources and document new observations of Northern Snakehead *Channa argus* to inform distribution maps in Virginia.

Introduction

- ◆ Northern Snakehead were first discovered in the Potomac River system in 2004.
- ◆ Over the last decade, they have spread into nearly the entire tidal Potomac system and several additional coastal tributaries in Virginia.
- ◆ Ecosystem-level impacts of this non-native species are uncertain.

Methods

- ◆ A centralized statewide database containing all Northern Snakehead observations was used to develop distribution maps in a GIS framework.



Discussion

- ◆ To date, collections have occurred in the Potomac and Rappahannock rivers/tributaries, and as far south as the Piankatank River.
- ◆ Anglers have illegally introduced fish into at least five impoundments.
- ◆ Propensity to survive relatively high salinities during migration indicated by presence near tributary mouths entering Chesapeake Bay.
- ◆ Natural movement likely occurs downstream during high freshwater flows and upstream during spring pre-spawn dispersal.
- ◆ The Public is encouraged to report observations using an Agency hotline or submit data to an easy-to-use online app (see above).

